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HEALTH OFFICIALS URGE MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESSES AWARENESS



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Panama City, Fla.— The Florida Department of Health in Bay County (DOH-Bay) officials emphasize the importance of Florida’s residents and visitors protecting themselves against mosquito-borne diseases, such as West Nile virus disease. The public should remain diligent in preventative measures like “**Drain and Cover.**”

“Bay County has gotten a significant amount of rain in the past several weeks. This has left numerous potential mosquito breeding habitats. Please follow these simple preventive measures to minimize these habitats and prevent mosquito-borne illness”, said Sandon S. Speedling, MHS, CPM, CPH, Administrator and Health Officer DOH-Bay.

DRAIN standing water to stop mosquitoes from multiplying.

- Drain water from garbage cans, house gutters, buckets, pool covers, coolers, toys, flower pots or any other containers where sprinkler or rain water has collected.
- Discard old tires, drums, bottles, cans, pots and pans, broken appliances and other items that aren't being used.
- Empty and clean birdbaths and pet's water bowls at least once or twice a week. □□
- Protect boats and vehicles from rain with tarps that don't accumulate water.
- Maintain swimming pools in good condition and appropriately chlorinated. Empty plastic swimming pools when not in use.

COVER skin with clothing or repellent.

- Clothing - Wear shoes, socks, and long pants and long-sleeves. This type of protection may be necessary for people who must work in areas where mosquitoes are present.
- Repellent - Apply mosquito repellent to bare skin and clothing.
 - Always use repellents according to the label. Repellents with DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, para-menthane-diol, 2-undecanone and IR3535 are effective.
 - Use mosquito netting to protect children younger than 2 months old.

Tips on Repellent Use

- Always read label directions carefully for the approved usage before you apply a repellent. Some repellents are not suitable for children.
- Products with concentrations of up to 30 percent DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide) are generally recommended. Other U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-approved repellents contain picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, para-menthane-diol, 2-undecanone or IR3535. These products are generally available at local pharmacies. Look for active ingredients to be listed on the product label.
- Apply insect repellent to exposed skin, or onto clothing, but not under clothing.

- In protecting children, read label instructions to be sure the repellent is age-appropriate. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), mosquito repellents containing oil of lemon eucalyptus or para-menthane-diol should not be used on children under the age of three years. DEET is not recommended on children younger than two months old.
- Avoid applying repellents to the hands of children. Adults should apply repellent first to their own hands and then transfer it to the child's skin and clothing.
- If additional protection is necessary, apply a permethrin repellent directly to your clothing. Again, always follow the manufacturer's directions.

COVER doors and windows with screens to keep mosquitoes out of your house.

- Repair broken screening on windows, doors, porches, and patios.

To determine which repellent is right for you, consider using the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's search tool for skin-applied repellent products:

<http://cfpub.epa.gov/oppref/insect/#searchform>.

The Department continues to conduct statewide surveillance for mosquito-borne illnesses, including West Nile Virus, Eastern Equine Encephalitis, St. Louis Encephalitis, Malaria and Dengue. For more information on mosquito-borne illnesses, visit DOH's Web site at www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/mosquito-borne-diseases/index.html or call your local county health department.

Residents of Florida are encouraged to report dead birds via the website for Surveillance of Wild-bird Die-offs located at <https://app.myfwc.com/FWRI/AvianMortality/>.

Florida Emergency Information Line: 1-(800)-342-3557

Public Information Emergency Support Function: (850) 921-0384

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